FITNESS

10 Ways You Can Protect Your Joints

1. **Maintain your ideal body weight.**
   The more you weigh, the more stress you are putting on your joints, especially your hips, knees, back and feet.

2. **Move your body.**
   Exercise protects joints by strengthening the muscles around them. Strong muscles keep your joints from rubbing against one another and wearing down cartilage.

3. **Stand up straight.**
   Good posture protects the joints in your neck, back, hips and knees.

4. **Use the big joints.**
   When lifting or carrying, use largest and strongest joints and muscles. This will help you avoid injury and strain on your smaller joints.

5. **Pace yourself.**
   Alternate periods of heavy activity with periods of rest.

6. **Listen to your body.**
   If you are in pain, don't ignore it. Pain after activity or exercise can be an indication that you have overstressed your joints.

7. **Don't be static.**
   Changing positions regularly will decrease the stiffness in your muscles and joints.

8. **Forget the weekend warrior.**
   Don't engage in activities for which your body isn't prepared. Start new activities slowly and safely until you know how your body will react to them. This will reduce the chance of injury.

9. **Wear proper safety equipment.**
   Don't leave helmets, knee and wrist pads at home. Make sure you get safety gear that is comfortable and fits appropriately.

10. **Ask for help.**
    Don't try to do a job that is too big for you to handle. Get another pair of hands to help out.